

ANG **Bayan**

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Editorial

End the US-Estrada regime!

The Party is pleased that a growing number of patriotic and progressive forces are standing up to resist and put an end to the antipeople, pro-imperialist and utterly rotten Estrada government.

The anti-Estrada united front is further broadening and spreading rapidly throughout the country. It has a core composed of militant and revolutionary workers and peasants and consists of politicians, church people, government employees, professionals and others. It is characterized by different levels of formal and informal cooperation and coordination among the forces that comprise it.

It is Estrada himself who inflames the people's widespread unity and resistance. The all-out puppetry, fascism and rottenness of the US-Estrada regime has caused the Filipino people, especially the toiling masses, to suffer unprecedented oppression and exploitation. Thus, in the past two years, the people's unity against Estrada has been rapidly forged. In unity with them, the revolutionary forces firmly stand for the people's national and democratic interests and against all attempts to trample on these.

The regime is extremely desperate to crush the anti-Estrada united front. It employs the foulest means, including anticommunist witch hunting against legitimate mass organizations and threats to charge protest leaders with sedition. Still, these only serve to further expose the rottenness of the ruling regime and create ever-favorable conditions for further strengthening the people's unity and raising their level of militancy to end Estrada's rule.

The issue of what measures to take after Estrada's



downfall can be resolved at the appropriate time through a consensus of a council of national unity to be comprised of representatives of the anti-Estrada united front. Militant workers and peasant organizations as well as other basic sectors and patriotic and progressive forces should strive to gain proper representation in this council.

It would be good if, corollary to the unity to end the Estrada regime, there would be unity as well against the worst antipeople and antinational policies and measures of Estrada such as the wage freeze, all-out trade liberalization, Oplan Makabayan, the Visiting Forces Agreement and others. This will open the possibility of attaining substantial reforms beneficial to the people and resuming the peace negotiations between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic

Front of the Philippines to discuss its substantive agenda.

It is clear to the Party that the overthrow of the US-Estrada regime is not equivalent to revolutionary change. Or to put it another way, the complete realization of revolutionary goals will not occur with Estrada's ouster. Still, this process opens fine opportunities for the revolutionary movement to advance in a big way. Thus, the Party and all revolutionary forces should act judiciously to further unite the people and intensify mass struggles to overthrow the US-Estrada regime.

All revolutionary forces should persuade the biggest number of influential personalities and types of organizations in different places and milieus including schools, offices, communities and churches to participate in meetings, rallies and other activities to express their disgust over the Estrada government.

While the anti-Estrada united front does not need a centralized type of organization, it can agree to launch major mass actions on specific dates in order to muster the strength of millions of people.

As mass struggles intensify, counterrevolutionary

groups will surely attempt to steal the limelight in order to put a damper on these struggles or sabotage its advance. We should continue to uphold the Party's policy against any form of unity with counterrevolutionaries. It is now ever important to expose the rottenness and wicked deeds of these counterrevolutionary groups.

The Party trusts that, so long as there is cooperation among the broad forces in the united front, the Estrada government will not last another one or two years. The crisis of the ruling system will further intensify during this period. The US-Estrada regime will continue to be rocked by its own scandals and by factionalism in the civil and military bureaucracy. More and bigger tactical offensives by the New

People's Army (NPA) as well as the continuing armed resistance of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front will deal it ever-bigger blows. The regime's resources will be rapidly depleted as it pours funds into its all-out military offensive.

While the anti-Estrada united front is being expanded and strengthened, the revolutionary forces should continue to exercise their initiative and carry out measures to strengthen themselves. They should further strengthen themselves in an all-sided way in order to advance and intensify the revolutionary struggle.

More than ever, the Party and revolutionary forces should take advantage of the crisis of the ruling system and vigorously intensify tactical offensives, advance the agrarian revolution, expand the revolutionary mass base and expand and strengthen the Party, NPA and Red political power in the countryside.

There is need to persevere in carrying out anti-imperialist, antifeudal and antifascist mass struggles in order not to lose sight of the people's more fundamental interests.

As the revolutionary movement strengthens itself, it enhances its position in the anti-Estrada united front. This will likewise contribute to the strengthening of the united front and its capability to unite the people and marshal their strength in their millions to end the US-Estrada regime. **AB**



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Win the armed revolution in the 21st century - Armando Liwanag

“We are confident of winning complete victory in the new democratic revolution in the early part of the 21st century.” Thus stated Comrade Armando Liwanag, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Philippines in his message on the 31st anniversary of the New People’s Army (NPA) on March 29.

According to Comrade Liwanag, the worsening crisis of the world capitalist system and the domestic ruling system is exceedingly favorable for the advance of the revolutionary movement. He said that the NPA and other revolutionary forces are in a position to take advantage of the situation because they have accumulated experience and strength and because the Second Great Rectification Movement has prepared them for greater victories in the future.

“As we enter the 21st century”, said Liwanag, “the capitalist crisis of overproduction and new world disorder are worsening rapidly.” Consequently, the monopoly bourgeoisie is intensifying its exploitation and oppression of workers. The resulting unprecedented destruction of productive forces and contraction of the world market will intensify all the basic contradictions in the world.

The main arena of violent conflicts between revolution and counter-revolution are the semicolonial and semifeudal countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, Liwanag said. Marxist-Leninist-Maoist parties are gaining strength and are illuminating

the road of armed revolution particularly in South and Southeast Asia.

Of the current domestic situation, Liwanag said that “the chronic crisis of the ruling system is rapidly worsening in an all-round way.” This crisis is inflicting extreme suffering on the broad masses of the people and inciting social unrest and armed revolution. It has reached a level similar to that on the eve of the declaration of martial law under the Marcos regime, he added.

The Philippines is still dependent on the importation of equipment, fuel and semi-processed components. Production, still export-oriented, is depressed by the global crisis of overproduction. The foreign trade deficit has been mounting from year to year. The country’s foreign debt is soaring. The exploiting classes are intensifying their exploitation of the working class and the peasantry.

“Because of the worsening socioeconomic crisis,” said Liwanag, “the ground is decreasing for amicable

mutual accommodation among the competing political factions of the exploiting classes.” Liwanag pointed out that political rivalry among the reactionaries is becoming more bitter and violent as the corruption of the Estrada clique becomes more flagrant.

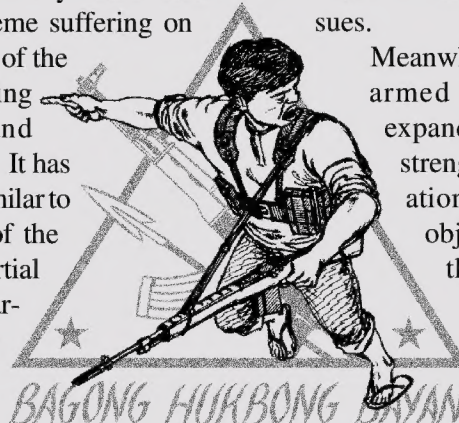
He added that the ascension of the Estrada ruling clique reflects an unprecedented deterioration of the economic and political system. “In so short a time,” he said, “there is already a popular outcry for his ouster or forced resignation.”

The US-Estrada regime is also escalating its attacks against the people. In response to this, the legal democratic movement of workers, peasants, women, youth, church people and other sectors of society has vigorously surged forward. Protests and demands have been raised on socioeconomic and political issues.

Meanwhile, revolutionary armed resistance has expanded and grown in strength. With this situation and towards the objective of winning the armed revolution in the present century, Liwanag asserted that

- The New People’s Army must continue to play the crucial role of carrying out the principal form of struggle. This is to defeat the armed forces of the enemy and thereby overthrow the ruling system of the big compradors and landlords in order to establish the people’s democratic government based on the alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

- The NPA must serve as a force for transforming backward villages into advanced political, military, economic and cultural bastions of the



On revolutionary taxation

Consequent to the widening scope of revolutionary political power and the correct exercise of the rights of a state, revolutionary taxation policies are successfully being implemented in many guerrilla fronts all over the country.

This has enraged the reactionary state. In a desperate attempt to slander the Party and the New People's Army (NPA), Estrada and his fascist minions have been maligning revolutionary taxation as "extortion" or a "burden on the masses". They wish to deny the existence of a state power outside of the reactionary government, one that is recognized even by foreign monopoly capitalist enterprises and fully supported by the oppressed masses.

Revolutionary taxation is legitimate

Revolutionary taxation is a legitimate function of the people's democratic government. It is enforced wherever Red political power exists or can be exercised. Funds and resources raised from this endeavor are used to defray the costs of administering the people's government and projects that

support the people's welfare; and provide the collective needs of the Party, NPA and mass organizations.

Revolutionary taxes imposed on class enemies comprise just compensation for privileges or concessions granted to their businesses or any other enterprise operating within the territory of the people's government. In conjunction with the payment of taxes is compliance with the policies and laws of the people's government that are focused primarily on ensuring the welfare of the people and the revolutionary movement.

A growing number of landlords, reactionary politicians and big comprador enterprises voluntarily recognize, or are obliged to recognize, revolutionary taxation. Consequently, resources raised from revolutionary taxation in the past few years have formed the greater bulk of the revolutionary movement's operational funds.

revolution.

- The Communist Party of the Philippines must exercise absolute leadership over the NPA and ensure that revolutionary politics is in command.

- We must solve the main problem of the democratic revolution, which is the land problem.

"It is our internationalist duty to persevere in the protracted people's war, intensify our tactical offensives

and deal deadly blows on the enemy," Liwanag explained. "Our revolutionary struggle and victories are our contribution to the world proletarian revolution and the broad anti-imperialist struggle of the people of the world."

"The ultimate aim is to defeat imperialism on a global scale and attain communism for the benefit of all mankind," concluded the statement. ■■

The full text of Comrade Armando Liwanag's statement on the NPA's 31st anniversary will be published in a special issue of Ang Bayan.

Characteristics of revolutionary taxation

Under the Party's strict guidance, the NPA enforces the policy of revolutionary taxation with the following characteristics, in accordance with conditions dictated by current levels of guerrilla warfare:

First, it has a class and progressive structure, meaning, bigger exploitative enterprises pay bigger taxes compared to smaller ones;

Second, it has a simple and distinct system, structure, basis and method of collection and likewise, distinct measures of enforcement and penalizing violators;

Third, taxes are sourced mainly from enterprises with operations in the countryside and

those within the scope of guerrilla warfare;

Fourth, administration, enforcement and determination of tax rates are decentralized and flexible under centralized guidelines and policies and based on certain levels of coordination; and

Fifth, taxation may be implemented on a national or interregional level aside from regional and local efforts.

We impose revolutionary taxes foremost, on operations or enterprises owned by big foreign capitalists, the big comprador bourgeoisie, bureaucrat capitalists and landlords. Particular projects or operations of the reactionary government are prioritized as well. Secondly, operations of the middle bourgeoisie and rich peasants may be levied revolutionary taxes.

Class coercion is employed against operations and businesses of exploiting classes who refuse to pay their tax obligations to the revolutionary govern-

A NECESSARY ADJUNCT OF PAYING TAXES IS TO ABIDE BY THE POLICIES AND LAWS OF THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNMENT THAT ARE FOCUSED PRIMARILY ON ENSURING THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE AND THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

ment. We, however, use persuasion rather than coercion on businesses of the middle bourgeoisie and rich peasants.

Imposing revolutionary taxes on class enemies and assertion by workers and peasants of their economic interests before capitalists and landlords are different though related processes. In enforcing revolutionary taxation, the Party and people's government support the agenda of workers and peasants; al-

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though success in realizing their interests relies mainly on their collective action.

On the issue of contributions

Given the current level of people's war, we consider funds raised from the ranks of the basic masses as contributions and distinguish these from revolutionary taxes. The former consist of assistance voluntarily extended by the masses, including the just share from benefits attained from agrarian revolution or union struggles democratically decided on by the mass organization and voluntarily given to the Party, the mass organization or the people's government.

By considering these as contributions instead of taxes, we ensure that the bulk of funds used to defray the expenses of higher levels of the people's government are sourced from taxation on class enemies and those who have a big capacity to pay their obligations. ▶

NPA launches punitive actions against companies, businesses

Seven companies and businesses were punished by Red fighters of the NPA because of non-compliance with the taxation policies of the people's democratic government. The punitive actions were undertaken through separate raids in Occidental Mindoro, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Tarlac, Bohol and Cotabato in March and April.

Cotabato. The NPA burned a bus owned by the Yellow Bus Company in Palian, Tupi, South Cotabato in the early morning of April 27 as punishment for the company's non-payment of revolutionary taxes.

Tarlac. Red fighters punished the Bondoc Poultry Farm owned by Cecilio Bondoc in Barangay Sta. Ines, Sta. Ignacia on April 10 at 8 p.m. Razed were the poultry farm, a generator, an XLT van, a delivery truck and two other company vehicles. The poultry farm sustained up to P2.5 million in damages.

Bondoc was proven to have tipped off the military on the NPA's movements in 1997 during a scheduled negotiation regarding revolutionary taxes. Later, Bondoc also had a detachment of the 69th IB set up in Sta. Ines, not far from his poultry farm.

Occidental Mindoro. The NPA punished the Jopel Construction Company in Sitio Siruban, Barangay Batong Buhay, Sablayan on May 1. It was around 8 p.m. when fighters of the Lucio de Guzman Command burned a crane and tires owned by the company and seized two sets of communications equipment. The punitive action was undertaken after the company ignored previous notifications and warnings from the NPA regarding its non-compliance with the revolutionary movement's policies, including non-payment of taxes.

Bohol. Red fighters burned quarry equipment, including three backhoes, two payloaders and a dump truck owned by Jose Jumamoy Jr. on April 9 in Sitio Kauslan, Barangay Kawayan, Inabanga. The equipment were estimated to have cost up to P4.5 million. Jumamoy, a former mayor of Inabanga and husband of the current mayor Josephine Jumamoy, was punished for refusing to pay revolutionary taxes, destroying the environment and masterminding illegal gambling, drug trafficking and gunrunning activities.

Nueva Vizcaya. The NPA raided the motorpool of a foreign contractor of the Casecnan Multipurpose Irrigation and electrification projects in Alfonso Castañeda town on April 9. The Red fighters disarmed the project's guards. People in the locality have been fiercely opposing the project because of its negative effect on the environment and their livelihoods.

Nueva Ecija. The NPA raided the G and L Associated Brokerage in Barangay Cambitala, Pantabangan on March 11 at 8 p.m. and burned a 10-wheeler truck owned by the company. Up to P1 million worth of property was destroyed. G and L Associated Brokerage is owned by Gerry Trinidad.

On March 4, the NPA swiftly raided the MIESCOR (Meralco Industrial Engineering Services Corp.) compound in Sitio Kakapalan, Barangay Salvacion North, Lupao and burned a backhoe worth up to P3 million. ■

Oppression of migrant workers

The Estrada government has neither the interest nor the capacity to create jobs because of its avid implementation of anti-industrialization policies in accordance with the dictates of imperialism and the interests of the local ruling classes. Thus, the huge army of the unemployed continues to grow.

Not unlike previous regimes, the US-Estrada regime regards the export of workers as the key to solving this problem. Estrada continues to auction off to foreigners at rock-bottom rates the contractual labor power of Filipino workers.

The Philippines is one of the largest exporters of labor in the world. There are now more than seven million Filipino migrant workers and a growing number of people who, driven by extreme poverty, are ready to suffer and work like slaves in other countries just so their families could survive. They can be found in around 180 countries worldwide.

More than 60% of all migrant Filipino workers are merely under contract. Thus, they usually endure even more oppressed conditions involving slave wages, absence of job security, maltreatment and the utmost deprivation of their rights as workers and as human beings.

Most migrant Filipino workers are to be found in the Middle East (one million, half of whom are in Saudi Arabia), Japan (250,000) and Hong Kong (180,000). Only less than three million of them are documented. They work in factories, construction sites, hospitals, ships, oil rigs and others. Many of them are employed as domestic helpers and entertainers and are vulnerable to abuse. There are also a number of professionals.

In the last quarter of 1999, migrant workers' remittances to the Philippines surged to \$8 billion from \$2 billion in 1998. This has, in recent years, been the single most important factor that has kept the sinking national economy from completely going under. As the government's official statistics are unable to conceal this fact, migrant workers have been hailed as the country's "new

heroes" in a fit of tokenism. Despite this, the reactionary regime is still the foremost accomplice of foreigners in exploiting Filipino migrant workers.

Collections. Even before they could travel abroad, migrant workers are already burdened by the government with various, oftentimes ridiculous fees such as the "voluntary membership fee", placement fee, payment for a "passbook", travel tax, airport fee and many more. This is apart from the bribes they have to shell out.

As a result, the government collects up to P76,000 from each migrant worker bound for Taiwan. The latter are thus often mired neck-deep in debts, especially workers who are forced to come home without having saved enough.

In Hong Kong, both the Philippine and Hong Kong governments slash more than P14,000 a month from the salaries of Filipino migrant workers.

The scheming government rakes in millions but not a single centavo benefits migrants or their families.

Slashing already meager wages. The Philippines is known for being a reservoir of one of the world's cheapest labor. Aside from paying them ▶

EVEN BEFORE THEY COULD TRAVEL ABROAD, MIGRANT WORKERS ARE ALREADY BURDENED BY THE GOVERNMENT WITH VARIOUS, OFTENTIMES RIDICULOUS FEES, SUCH AS THE "VOLUNTARY MEMBERSHIP FEE", PLACEMENT FEE, PAYMENT FOR A "PASSBOOK", TRAVEL TAX, AIRPORT FEE AND MANY MORE.

◀ Taxation on the masses, as contrasted with taxation on class enemies, is not payment for concessions or privileges. It is instead a way of systematically raising funds to implement specific social services. Because this could not yet be systematically addressed, taxing the masses can only be implemented upon attaining a higher level of people's war and after establishing the necessary structures of the revolutionary people's government.

We make sure that contributions collected from the masses do not burden them or run contrary to their interests. We ensure that the method of raising contributions strictly considers the basic masses' capacity and their level of consciousness. It does not involve coercion or disciplinary measures as in the system of taxation.

We implement revolutionary taxation as part of the effective exercise of state power by the people's demo-

cratic government.

Although the function of taxation is not as basic as Party building, armed struggle and united front building, its implementation is a necessary part of the revolutionary movement's overall advance. A sound taxation policy contributes greatly to the further advance of the revolutionary effort; while the advance of the revolution raises our capability to implement revolutionary taxation. ■

◀ relatively low wages, foreign employers and governments devise various ways of siphoning money from Filipino workers.

Workers employed as domestic helpers in Hong Kong are among the Filipino migrants who receive the low-

est monthly wages (HK\$3,670 or P18,000). Worse, government collections leave them with an even smaller amount to take home to the Philippines, too meager to provide for the basic monthly needs of a typical family.

In Asia, the collection of forced

savings is rampant. Foreign employers collect forced savings supposedly as a guarantee against abandonment by an employee. Amounting to up to a third of an employees' monthly salaries, the fund is supposed to be given to the workers at the termination of their contracts. But whether migrant workers actually get it or not is all up to the whim of their employers. At the Ching Yang Tech Co. in Taiwan, for example, a total of NT\$6.8 million (P95.2 million) in forced savings was amassed from 94 Filipino migrants.

No job security. As unemployment worsens in capitalist countries, more and more migrant workers are being arbitrarily laid off from foreign businesses that are going bankrupt. In fact, migrant workers are the first to be retrenched. This year, around 40,000 Filipino migrants in Japan and 7,000 more in South Korea were forcibly repatriated ostensibly in a drive against undocumented migrant workers.

Repression of workers' rights. Migrant workers are expressly forbidden to organize unions anywhere in the world. Because they are merely contract workers, they are denied the right to negotiate for additional wages, job

security and benefits. They are forced to accept working conditions stipulated in onerous contracts drawn up by placement agencies here in the Philippines.

In Saudi Arabia, anyone who attempts to form any group to advance the rights of migrant workers is slapped with a jail term if not executed.

Those who dare to stand up and complain about their oppressive conditions are blacklisted. Anyone on this list loses any chance to work abroad.

Abandonment by the reactionary state. The reactionary government failed to act on as many as 3,007 cases of migrant workers in 1999, proof of its apathy in the face of migrant workers' worsening oppression and viola- ▶

Unity and struggle of migrant workers

The Ramos regime hastily passed the Migrant Act of 1995 or RA 8042 in reaction to widespread protests against the reactionary Philippine government's gross negligence over Flor Contemplacion's execution in 1995.

But the vacuous RA 8042 has only succeeded in firing up the people's anger, particularly that of migrant Filipinos, as it reinforces the commodification of migrant labor.

It has pushed migrant Filipinos to forge stronger unity and join the struggle of the broad masses of the people against the system that oppresses them.

Their experience continues to make migrant workers realize that the reactionary government is not their ally in their struggle to advance their welfare and assert their rights.

Towards the end of 1998, organized migrant Filipinos in Hong Kong fought for a reduction in the authentication fee, which the Philippine government collects from them. Because of the Estrada regime's failure to act on their petition, thousands of migrant Filipino workers decided to rely on their own strength. Through the concerted efforts of an alliance composed of more than 80 organizations, the migrants were able to pressure the Philippine Consulate in Hong Kong to lower the fee from HK\$425 (P2,125) to HK\$200 (P1,000).

The migrant workers reaped this small victory while waging a struggle against wage cuts. The Hong Kong government originally planned to reduce migrants' wages by 20%. But because the migrant workers lobbied as one, they were able to push for a 75% reduction in the wage cut.

The migrant workers are also currently opposing Estrada's Memorandum of Instruction No. 8 that imposes a US\$25-fee allegedly for the processing of contracts. Hong Kong migrants have so far successfully prevented the implementation of this order.

However, even if migrant workers succeed in countering other ploys of government both here and abroad, they will surely be cheated and subjected to extortion again and again by the reactionary regime as well as by its greedy foreign co-conspirators.

But such exploitation could not go on forever. Migrant workers have been persistently and vigorously resisting not only other antimigrant policies and practices, but also the ruling system that relentlessly abuses them, their families and the entire Filipino people. **AB**

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◀ tions of the numerous international conventions on labor to which it is a signatory. Many migrant workers have attempted to flee from their employers because of maltreatment, physical and sexual abuse, contract violations, dire working conditions, long working hours, lack of overtime pay and intense discrimination.

That the reactionary government is reneging on its responsibility to protect migrant workers is a glaring fact. As of the end of 1998, around 2,000 migrant workers imprisoned in Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Japan had been abandoned by the government. At the end of 1999, around 200 former migrant workers were being treated at the National Center for Mental Health due to various psychological illnesses caused by severe maltreatment. Around 700 Filipino migrant workers die every year, 25% under suspicious circumstances. Every month, an average of 10 Filipino migrant workers' are brought home in coffins to the Philippines.

The subjugation of Filipino migrant workers is sure to continue with the full deregulation of labor migration that takes effect this year in accordance with the Migrant Act of 1995. With this, the government outrightly shakes off all responsibility in matters concerning migrant workers' wages, terms of contract and working conditions, claiming that these are "exclusively between the employer and the employee".

Their very experience teaches Filipino migrants that they could never hope to have a bright future for their families under the current reactionary system. Not surprisingly, growing numbers of migrant workers are joining the revolutionary struggle.

It is proper and necessary for the Party to ceaselessly arouse, organize and mobilize migrant workers to tread the path of revolution. Their families should also be painstakingly made aware of the ruling system's inutility to look after the people's interests and shown that only a revolution could lay the basis for economic stability. ■■

Crisis in the banking system

Successive bank mergers in the Philippines indicate the deep crisis in the banking system. The previous year saw mergers among some of the country's biggest banks. The first among the big mergers was that between the Philippine Commercial International Bank (PCIB) and Equitable Bank. This was followed by Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.'s (Metrobank) purchase of the Philippine Banking Corporation (Philbank) in August. In November, the merger Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI)-Far East Bank and Trust Co. (FEBTC) wrested from Metrobank the position of being the biggest bank. Metrobank once more took the lead with its purchase of Asian Banking Corp. and Solidbank.

Banks raked in huge profits with the economic "development" bubble in 1994-96 highlighted by the sale of their overvalued stocks, stock trading and financial speculation in the stock market, extension of credit to speculative real estate businesses and funding of ambitious corporate expansion schemes. Bank profits further ballooned with the influx of foreign capital, the latter reinforcing the growing stock market bubble that temporarily and artificially inflated the country's financial system.

Alongside and prior to this, banks benefited immensely from the accelerated local borrowing of successive reactionary regimes since Aquino to cover the national budget deficit, salvage losing public corporations and pay foreign debts. In the last two years of the Ramos government, banks were the primary financiers of the program to privatize state-owned corporations and the build-operate-transfer schemes of private corporations and the government.

When the speculative-foreign-capital-driven economic bubble burst in mid-1997, the fundamental weakness of the Philippine banking system was exposed along with its role as the comprador bourgeoisie in the country.

Values of stocks and bank assets took a nosedive. Excessive lending of capital to speculative businesses and companies was exposed, especially in real estate. Anomalous deals regarding the use of depositors' savings to finance bankrupt businesses were bared.

Many banks, especially the smaller ones, were forced to close down when depositors went on a bankrun. The latter led to a depletion of capital, especially since only 20% of banks' overall resources is allocated for daily transactions with individuals. The banks also found it difficult to liquidate the assets of businesses they had foreclosed. Investors fled the country and ▶

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A cause for celebration on May One

Further militancy and resistance of the working class

The first Labor Day of the new millennium provides a good opportunity to celebrate the victories that the Filipino working class continues to reap and further strengthen the ranks of the toiling masses to face even greater struggles.

Opposing the policies of the US-Estrada regime. Militant workers are at the forefront of protests against policies that oppress and inflict suffering on the Filipino people. In 1999, workers led struggles against oil price hikes, the attempt to amend the constitution, the ratification of the Visiting Forces Agreement and for a P125 increase in

the daily wage.

On March 30, despite the reactionary regime's attempts to foil the mass action, a successful coordinated transport strike paralyzed major jeepney routes nationwide (*see related news story on p.14*). The people resounded their opposition to continuous increases in oil prices and the proposed onerous

road user's tax; and their call for the Estrada government's ouster.

Increasing number of strikes. The reactionary regime's intensifying torment of workers has led to a continued growth in the number of strikes.

In the first three months of this year alone, 16 strikes involving 6,000 workers have been launched. This already comprises 37% of the total number of workers (15,517) who went on strike in the whole of 1999. Along with this, more than 140 notices of strike involving 40,000 workers have been filed with the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

In 1999, of the 849 notices of strike (involving 162,000 workers) filed with the DOLE, 58 strikes pushed through.

This April, workers from Solidbank, PT&T and Duty Free Philippines, Inc. also went on strike due to impending retrenchments resulting ►

◀ bigger banks and companies capable of saving smaller ones turned conservative. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) was forced to salvage the remaining capital of smaller banks and close down a number of them.

Banks' exposure to bad loans grew severalfold as they poured billions into companies and businesses that went bankrupt and/or closed down. Up till the last quarter of 1999, 14.61% (or P217.6 billion) of overall bank loans were bad loans; meanwhile, in August 1999, 34.95% of thrift banks' total credit exposure were bad loans.

The rate of bad loans grew when banks refused to increase their total loan portfolio in reaction to the continued shrinkage of their capital, to companies' and government's dwindling capacity to pay and to the plummeting economy. New loans extended by banks have been decreasing since 1998-99 from a peak 41-percent growth rate in 1996. The amount continues to dwindle in the first months of 2000, contrary to claims by the BSP and the Estrada government.

To address the banking crisis, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), through the BSP, has been directing and coordinating bank mergers. It is estimated that only four, from a previous 10-15, would end up as the biggest banks in the country. The IMF has been insisting on this tack on the bankrupt notion that concentrating the banking system in the hands of a few would stabilize the Philippine financial system.

In truth, the financial system's instability proceeds from the fundamental issue of the absence of basic industries in the Philippines' deformed economy. Only industry can create new value or wealth that is transformed into money and organized by the financial system.

The Philippine economy is in chronic crisis. Even at the height of the speculative capital-driven bubble in 1994-96 that caused the artificial inflation of the banking and service sectors, the manufacturing and agricultural sectors continued to decline.

Under a semicolonial and semifeudal system, the financial sector is divorced from production and is merely an arena for gambling by big foreign speculators and the big comprador bourgeoisie who rake in millions of dollars from stock market transactions and currency speculation. The 1997 flight of speculative capital brought in during the 1994-96 period has resulted in the sudden collapse of the financial sector from which it has been unable to recover.

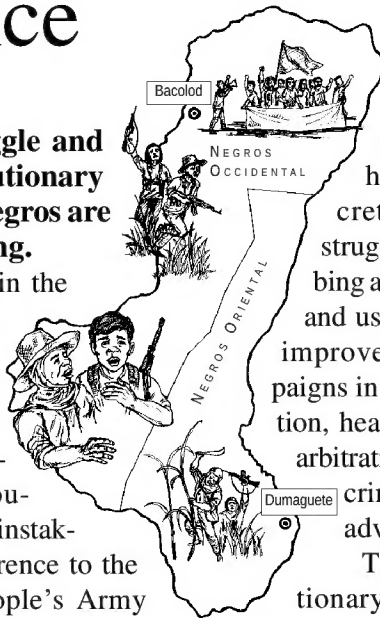
The instability of the financial system is also brought about by the government's all-out borrowing to pump-prime the dwindling economy. In 1999, for instance, the overall deficit covered through local and foreign borrowings reached P111 billion. In the main, the big local banks are big bourgeois comprador businesses and serve the interests of big foreign capitalists. Their mergers can only mean the tightening of foreign control on the Philippine banking system and therefore, greater foreign capability to direct the pattern of investments and expenditures in the country. ■

Revolutionary struggle in Negros continues to advance

The armed struggle and the entire revolutionary movement in Negros are continuously advancing.

The guerrilla fronts in the island continue to expand. From a few hundred in 1992, the number of those organized and influenced by the movement has grown to thousands. As a result of its painstaking mass work and adherence to the mass line, the New People's Army (NPA) is able to mobilize the masses in building and consolidating the people's political power in the countryside.

Through antifeudal mass cam-



paings, the masses have achieved concrete gains from their struggle against landgrabbing and to reduce land rent and usury, raise wages and improve production. Campaigns in education, organization, health, defense, culture, arbitration and drives against criminality are likewise advancing.

The armed revolutionary movement unifies and strengthens the people and inspires the legal mass struggle against the US-Estrada regime in the island's urban centers. Since the last quarter of 1993, the advance of sectoral and

multisectoral struggles has been sustained against the Ramos and Estrada regimes, both agents of US imperialism, the comprador big bourgeoisie and the big landlords. This year, the people's struggle for the ouster of Estrada has become more militant and vigorous. The workers along with the peasantry, the youth, women and other positive forces demonstrated their strength as they advanced their economic and political struggle.

The revolutionary movement in Negros achieved these victories amid the extreme suffering inflicted upon the people of the island by the schemes of Eduardo 'Danding' Cojuangco and his cohorts. Cojuangco and company use the local bureaucracy to further wrest control of various businesses and contracts and to intensify landgrabbing.

Thousands of families are starving. They often have to make do with nothing more than root crops. Large-scale landgrabbing by big landlords, mining companies and big bureaucrats has left the peasants with no land to till. More than 30,000 farm workers in the cities of Bago and Bacolod, as well as in ►

◄ from company mergers and management refusal to heed workers' just demands.

These reflect the workers' broadening resistance to the continued depression of wages, rampant contractualization and layoffs, dismal working conditions and the repression of workers' right to organize unions, to strike and to collectively bargain with management.

Intensifying militancy against fascism. Instead of quelling the workers' rage, fascism has only succeeded in firing up the workers' fighting spirit. Some remarkable examples are the Shoemart (SM) workers' strike in the last quarter of 1999 and the ongoing workers' strike at the Manila Hotel that started in February.

In November 1999, repeated violent dispersals by police and hired goons hounded the peaceful picket lines in front of SM branches. Scores of workers and supporters were hurt and wounded. But this did not stop

the workers' struggle for just wages and job security. The SM workers persevered and successfully pushed management to grant a P65 increase in their daily wage.

Police personnel from the Western Police District (WPD) also repeatedly broke up the Manila Hotel workers' picket line. But the militant workers just as repeatedly put it up. On February 14, the WPD violently dispersed an assembly in the middle of a program and arrested three of the strikers including the leader of the Manila Hotel Employees Association. On March 11, 10 protesters were arrested while mass was being said at the picket line. Many other demonstrators and supporters were hurt and wounded. The assault was repeated on March 14. Despite all these, the workers continue to struggle to assert their rights. **AB**

**NUMBER OF WORKERS WHO WENT ON STRIKE
(January-February 2000)**

Company	Number
Gelmart Industries Phils., Inc.	1,900
Pepsi Cola Products Phils., Inc.	650
Philippine Appliance Corp.	609
Skylark Plastic Industries	350
Mustad Terminal Tackle Phils.	300
VP Liner Inc.	300
Grand Boulevard Hotel	270
Associated Wire Corp.	200
Philippine Development Industrial Corp.	157
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	145
Monterey Foods Corp.	126
Fuji Reynolds Corp.	103
Kalayaan Arts & Crafts Inc.	100
Medicard Phils., Inc.	90
Total	5300

◀ the towns of Valladolid and San Enrique are expected to lose their jobs due to the construction of an irrigation system that will benefit an agribusiness corporation owned by Cojuangco and Negros Occidental Gov. Rafael Coscolluela. Meanwhile, thousands of workers have been victimized by retrenchment, underemployment, union-busting, low wages and other attacks on labor.

The sugar industry which is the main pillar of Negros' entire economy, continues to decline. Already quite a number of industrial, commercial and agribusiness enterprises have closed.

Local government funds earmarked for basic social services are being squandered on commercialized religio-cultural festivals and tourism-related businesses in an effort to attract investments. This is a result of tightened control over the local government by the Cojuangco clique which includes the Montilla, Alvares, Marañon, Palanca, Garcia, Paras and Cardenas families.

The local economy's decline has also decreased the amount of local funds that members of the Cojuangco-Coscolluela clique could divide among themselves. In this regard, the clique has been intensifying its illegal drug operations and strengthening the local warlords.

In Bacolod City, the situation has been the cause of intense conflict among local officials from the Cojuangco, Montelibano and Guanzon families. Nonetheless, despite such rivalries, they unanimously uphold counterrevolution under the US-Estrada regime's Oplan Makabayan. Big comprador-landlords all approve of close cooperation between the military and civil bureaucracy in containing and destroying the revolutionary and progressive people's movement.

Militarization and fascism in Negros have worsened with the turnover of the counterrevolutionary campaign to the Philippine Army through its 303rd Infantry Brigade. Human rights violations have become more rampant. Still unsatisfied with the present deployment in the island of three army bat-

talions (excluding an engineering battalion), two Scout Ranger companies, a Special Forces company, two PNP Regional Mobile Group battalions, seven PNP Provincial Mobile Group companies, more than 2,000 CAFGU auxiliaries and the private armies and goons of warlords, the local reactionaries have been pushing for the reinforcement of their private armies and the CAFGU.

**THE PEOPLE TURN TO THE
REVOLUTIONARY
MOVEMENT TO SEEK
JUSTICE FOR THEIR
OPPRESSION BY
COJUANGCO AND HIS
COHORTS. IN RESPONSE
TO THE PEOPLE'S
GRIEVANCES, THE PARTY
AND THE NPA ARE
CALLING FOR THE
INTENSIFICATION OF THE
ARMED REVOLUTION IN
NEGROS AS THE ONLY
WAY TO END THE
COJUANGCO CLIQUE'S
POWER, FRUSTRATE
OPLAN MAKABAYAN AND
LIBERATE THE PEOPLE
FROM EXPLOITATION AND
OPPRESSION.**



Combat and intelligence operations as well as civil-military operations continue in the countryside. Local reactionary officials join anti-people and counterrevolutionary operations in the countryside and in urban areas. Peace and Order Council meetings presided over by Coscolluela focus on developing coordination among the military, the local government and reactionary individuals and NGOs to achieve the objective of "crushing" the people's revolutionary movement by 2001.

Along with these, RPM-RPA-ABB leaders Arturo Tabara, Warren Calizo and Luisito dela Cruz continue to serve as reactionary psywar agents out to sabotage the legal mass movement in the cities and the armed struggle in the countryside. Their armed groups have been launching militarist provocations to justify militarization and the suppression of the people.

But instead of recoiling from the Cojuangco clique's blatant exploitation and Oplan Makabayan's terrorism, the revolutionary forces are strengthening their ranks. The Party and the NPA in Negros are closely linking up with the masses by painstakingly arousing, organizing and mobilizing them.

The people turn to the revolutionary movement to seek justice for their oppression by Cojuangco and his cohorts. The revolutionary movement is determined to frustrate Oplan Makabayan as it did the Oplan Lambat Bitag series in Negros. In response to the people's grievances, the Party and the NPA are calling for the intensification of the armed revolution in Negros as the only way to end the Cojuangco clique's power, frustrate Oplan Makabayan and liberate the people from exploitation and oppression. **AB**



The fascist state on a rampage

In the Cordillera. Ten armed men who identified themselves as Criminal Investigation Service agents abducted Lorna Rivera Baba on March 17 in front of the Philippine Independent Church (PIC) in Pidigan, Abra. Baba, a lay worker, was taken at gunpoint as she was boarding a car. The armed men also trained their guns at Baba's companions, PIC parish priests Fr. Noel Dacuycuy and Padi Emelyn Gasco and the latter's driver and brother Julius Cesar Gasco, who was also kicked in the head. The abductors failed to present an arrest warrant and merely claimed that Baba was involved in a carnapping case.

Earlier, on February 7, still unidentified men ransacked the office of Dinteg (Cordillera Indigenous People's Law Center). Dinteg is handling cases filed by national minorities against mining companies operating in their areas. Seized from the office were documents and papers, computer disks, cassette tapes and other valuable items. That same day, suspected military men broke into the house of Bishop Juan Marigza, a human rights advocate.

In the light of these incidents, the Promotion of Church People's Response (PCPR) denounced the regime's intensifying harassment of church people. The PCPR also firmly opposed militarization in the Cordillera and the construction of the San Roque Dam which has already displaced 60,000 Ibalois.

Meanwhile, the Innabuyog-Metro Baguio exposed cases of sexual harassment and abuse of women by Philippine Army soldiers

stationed in Kalinga. The cases involved soldiers from the 21st and 48th Infantry Battalions in Balbalan, Lubuagan, Pasil and Pinukpuk towns and the 501st Infantry Brigade in Barangay Calanan, Tabuk.

In Bulacan. Melencio Cañete, 80, leader of the Sandigang Samahan ng mga Magsasaka sa Tungkong Mangga, and Wilfredo Inocillas were arrested on February 16 in San Jose del Monte town on charges of involvement in the killing of a guard employed by Gregorio 'Greggy' Araneta, a son-in-law of the late dictator Marcos. Araneta is seeking foreign partners for his plan to convert the land tilled by the farmers into commercial complexes.

To pursue this plan, Araneta's guards destroyed the farmers' crops and set fire to their houses. Cañete's organization condemned these actions.

In Batangas. Security guards shot dead Terry Sevilla and Roger Allah, both farmers, in Hacienda Looc, Nasugbu on March 6. The victims were among the peasants opposed to Fil-Estate Development and Realty Corp. and Manila Southcoast Development Corp.'s plan to convert the 8,650-hectare estate into the Harbortown Golf Course and Marinas.

In Oriental Mindoro. Seven civilians were massacred on April 6 by two drunken soldiers of the 49th IB in Barangay San Isidro, Victoria.

Because of the people's intense anger over the killings and other human rights violations perpetrated by the 49th IB, the regime was forced to pull

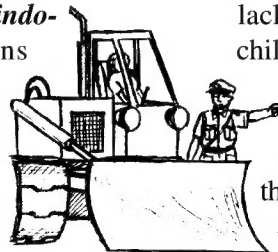
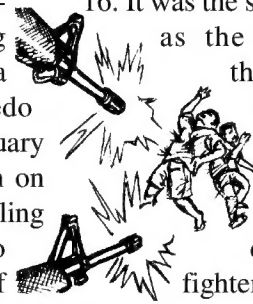
out the abusive unit from Mindoro.

In Albay. Eight urban poor residents were injured when police forces and a paid demolition team violently demolished their homes in Barangay Kapantawan, Legazpi City on March 16. It was the second demolition try, as the first attempt was thwarted by the residents who put up a barricade.

In Leyte. Three youths and two children alleged to be Red fighters were sprayed with bullets by troopers from the 82nd Reconnaissance Company in Sitio Bugho, San Isidro, Caligharan, Leyte on April 4. Seriously wounded in the incident were Jennifer, 2; Jean Ann, 4; Joseph, 17; Nico, 20; and Joey, 25. The soldiers further harassed the victims when troopers menacingly hung around the hospital where they were brought for treatment.

On March 12, 43rd IB troopers closed in on a house in Bontoc, Southern Leyte and peppered it with gunfire. Killed were Aniceto dela Cruz, a Red fighter; his wife Angela; their 13-year-old daughter Sarah; and two other women.

Edu, the dela Cruz couple's 12-year-old son, was wounded in the attack. As a testament to the regime's lack of concern for his rights as a child, the soldiers arrested Edu and charged him with illegal possession of firearms. The military also forcibly turned him over to the Department of Social Welfare and Development despite his grandmother's request for custody over the child so he could be with his other siblings and relatives. As the fascist government has been doing to other child prisoners, Edu is being





The fascist state on a rampage

used for counterrevolutionary propaganda.

In Mindanao. More than 100,000 people have been forced to leave their homes in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur due to the all-out war being launched by brigades of AFP and police forces against the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) despite a ceasefire agreement between the two parties.

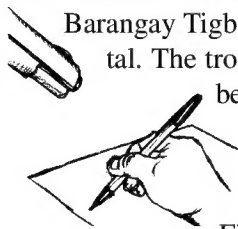
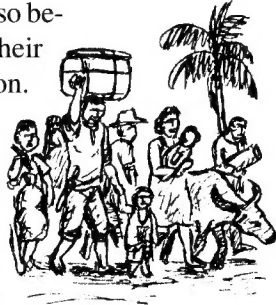
In other parts of Mindanao, the reactionary armed forces are also besieging the population in their pursuit of counterrevolution.

In the first week of March, 63 peasants, including *lumads*, three pregnant women, 14 children and six infants were forced out of their homes by the 403rd Infantry Brigade in Sitio Kalut, Barangay Sta. Filomena, Quezon, Bukidnon. The peasants were obliged to leave behind their corn and vegetable crops ready for harvest as well as their farm animals. Later, the 403rd Infantry Brigade claimed that they had successfully overrun an NPA camp.

At least seven of those who evacuated were forcibly taken by the soldiers to their detachment, made to sign blank sheets of paper, photographed and ordered to report to the detachment every month. The AFP thereafter issued a report branding the farmers as rebel returnees.

On February 17, forty troopers from the 30th Special Forces of the Philippine Army swooped down on Sitio Limot, a *lumad* community in Barangay Tigbawan, Baganga, Davao Oriental. The troopers accused the residents of being NPA guerrillas. Earlier, 26 Baganga residents had also been accused by fascist soldiers of being Red fighters. Fifteen of them, including two children aged 10 and 12, were held at gunpoint, ordered to strip and forcibly circumcised.

On February 7, two Red fighters were beheaded and their bodies burned by a CAFGU element right in the presence of Talaandig tribal folk in Katalawan, Kabanglasan, Bukidnon. The killings were part of a military campaign to deter *lumads* from helping or joining the revolutionary movement. **AB**



NEWS NEWS NEWS NEWS

12 SOLDIERS, CAFGU KILLED IN BOHOL AMBUSH

Eight Philippine Army soldiers and four CAFGU elements were killed in an ambush by New People's Army Red fighters in Sta. Catalina, Sagbayan, Bohol on March 2. Among those killed was 2Lt. Socrates Que, commander of the group. Three more soldiers were wounded in the ambush. Seized from the soldiers were 14 high-powered firearms.

The soldiers belonged to the 7th Special Forces Unit based in Sitio Kalubihan, Poblacion, Sagbayan. The unit is active in search and destroy operations in the mountains of Sagbayan and adjacent towns.

16 FIREARMS SEIZED IN CEBU RAID

Sixteen firearms, including seven M16s and a two-way base radio were seized by the New People's Army in a raid on the police station and municipal hall of Sogod, Cebu at around 8 a.m. on April 27. The Red fighters also intended to arrest Sogod mayor Thaddeus Durano, but he was not in his office. Durano, a notorious fascist and crony of the late dictator Marcos was responsible for the abduction and murder of Fr. Rudy Romano and Noli Ylagan in 1985 and other militant workers and peasants.

MACLI-ING KILLER PUNISHED BY NPA

Former Philippine Army major Leodegario Adalem was punished by the NPA's Josefino Corpuz Command on April 11 at 11 a.m. in front of the National Irrigation Administration provincial office in Tarlac City.

Adalem, who belonged to PMA Class 1975, was responsible for the April 24, 1980 murder of Macli-ing Dulag, an Ifugao tribal leader who fought Cellophil Resources and the Chico River Dam project.

According to Jose Agtalon, spokesperson of the Josefino Corpuz Command, Adalem also led a syndicate involved in illegal gambling, drug trafficking and gun-running in Central Luzon.

Likewise punished by the NPA was Tomas Pangilinan, a National Bureau of Investigation agent and Adalem's partner in crime.

In a related incident, two soldiers of the Philippine Army's 70th IB were killed in an NPA ambush on March 15 in Baler, Aurora.

POLICEMEN AMBUSHED IN QUEZON

One policeman was killed and seven were wounded in an ambush by the NPA on April 16, around 2:30 p.m. in Barangay Magsikap, General Nakar, Quezon. Among the wounded were two officials identified as P/Insp. Jesse Batag and P/Insp. Dominic Bacay. The two teams of the Special Action Forces and the Regional Mobile Group of the Philippine National Police were conducting a patrol when ambushed by the Red fighters.

MASSIVE TRANSPORT STRIKE SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED

A successful transport strike was launched by militant jeepney drivers on March 30 in different parts of the country. It was led by the Pinag-isang Samahan ng mga Tsuper at Opereytor Nationwide (Piston) and the Kilusang Mayo Uno.

Patriotic drivers, workers and other progressive sectors and groups participated in the mass action. They firmly opposed the unending series of oil price hikes and the anti-people road users' tax bill. The people also criticized Estrada's defense of the oil cartel and his refusal to heed the people's demand for the rollback of oil prices, the repeal of the deregulation law, the dismantling of the cartel and the nationalization of the oil industry.

The strike paralyzed transportation in Bulacan (90%); Pampanga (100%); Tarlac (95%); Bataan (100%); Laguna (Calamba, 95% and

San Pablo City, 90%); Cavite (74%); Albay (99%); Sorsogon (100%); Camarines Sur (100%); Bacolod City (100%); Negros Occidental (98%); Negros Oriental (98%); Cebu (100%); Tagbilaran City (100%); Butuan City (90%); Cagayan de Oro City (90%); Davao City (98%); Kidapawan (100%); Cotabato (95%); Mati (98%); Tagum City (99%); Digos (100%); General Santos City (100%); and the major jeepney routes in Metro Manila (85%).

MAKIBAKA EXHORTS WOMEN TO JOIN PEOPLE'S WAR

"It is high time that women, especially those from the working class and the peasantry, join the New People's Army in their vast numbers." Thus called the Makabayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababaihan (MAKIBAKA) in its observance of International Working Women's Day on March 8.

"We are not playthings nor mere objects of lust that have characterized Estrada's conduct towards womanhood," said MAKIBAKA. "Like our menfolk, women have the capability to bear arms to overthrow the reactionary government," the organization asserted. MAKIBAKA stated that in various parts of the archipelago, women are advancing and fighting through guerrilla warfare or in strikes, rallies, barricades and other forms of protest actions.

Today, according to MAKIBAKA, there is a growing number of women rallying to the call to oust Estrada or force him to resign. But it warned that by itself, the US-Estrada regime will not give up its power or

listen to any such call. It can instead let loose more violent fascist attacks. On this basis, MAKIBAKA also called for the setting up in the urban areas of an underground movement with sufficient breadth and thoroughness in factories, communities, schools, private companies, government agencies, hospitals, churches and other places.

3 SOLDIERS KILLED IN CAGAYAN AMBUSH

Three 41st IB troopers were killed and another was wounded in an NPA ambush in Sitio Ilagan, Barangay Iluru, Rizal, Cagayan on March 20. The soldiers were aboard a jeep bound for the Rizal town center when ambushed by the Red fighters. Seized from the soldiers were their M16 rifles.

The 41st IB owes many blood debts to the people and the revolutionary movement in the border areas of Apayao and Cagayan.

2 POLICEMEN DISARMED IN SAMAR

Four M16 rifles, a .45 cal. pistol, 12 short magazines and four sets of police uniforms were confiscated by the NPA without firing a single shot in a raid in Barangay Botong, Lapi-nig, Northern Samar in the first week of March.

Red fighters who posed as government soldiers surrounded the houses of PO1 Elias Labaca and PO1 Antonio Boses. The two policemen readily surrendered their firearms and other items to the NPA.